

The Commons also asked for four Earls Suffolk, a man usually of little importance in politics; March, the Duke's most powerful and constant enemy ; lastly, Warwick and Stafford, who succeeded, like several other noblemen on this occasion, in running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. But however equivocal the conduct of one or two members of the committee afterwards proved to be, all the Bishops, Earls and Lords when first appointed pledged them-selves to support the Commons and were all regarded as champions of the cause. * The knights/ says the chronicler, * made them swear to be of their counsels ; nor was it difficult to extort this oath from them, since each and every one of them loved most ardently the honour of the King, the weal of the realm, and the peace of the people.''

Even when thus strengthened by the patronage of the great, it was with no light heart that the Commons entered upon the task of impeaching the Privy Councillors.² It was not hard to guess that they were taking the responsibility on to their own shoulders ; that when the tide began to turn, half their noble supporters would desert them and the other half retire to the country, leaving the leaders of the Commons to the vengeance of the Court. They were aware that their course was new, na[^]ai-dous, and doubtful. The prerogative of the Commons to impeach great offenders at the bar of the Lords, afterwards so often and so famously employed, was devised as a new thing by this Good Parliament. Hitherto the Lower House had fought with the King for the right of granting and withholding taxes. That right had now been admitted, and it was accordingly employed as the means of overhauling the administration and government of the country, and of calling the servants of the Crown to account.

As the Commons had a policy and a purpose of their own independent of their patrons, it was only natural that their leader should be, not Percy or March, but one of their own number. Such a man was found in Peter de la Mare, one of the two knights who represented the county of Hereford. He

. *Ang.* > 68-70; *Rot. Parl.* **ii.** 83\$. » *Chron.*